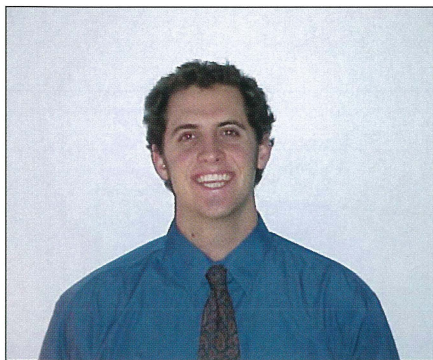


Ben Ready For Varied Global Challenges



Ben Tredrea

The opportunity to travel and work all over the world are some of the many reasons Ben Tredrea is studying to become a geophysicist.

Ben (25) is currently studying honours for his Bachelor of Science degree in geophysics at Curtin University and he is looking forward to a rewarding career he hopes will provide stimulating and challenging opportunities in the upstream oil and gas industry.

"The main comfort for me in choosing this career path is that with most companies in this industry, further education and training does appear to be highly valued and ingrained in the corporate ethos", he said. He said further education and training were some of the greatest benefits that working in the industry would provide.

Ben said he had received no exposure to the oil and gas industry during his high school years and only really became aware of the opportunities it provided later, during his undergraduate studies in geophysics at Curtin University.

Ben believes the oil and gas industry needs to do more to attract talented young people to the industry. "I think that potential future explorationists are still being poached by other industries where prospects seem more exciting and alluring – in particular the IT and new technology fields. This may be due to the fact that the oil and gas industry still does not effectively showcase the opportunities and rewards available to young men and women."

While Ben said the Petroleum Club of WA's School's Information Programme provided a good introduction of the industry to high school students, more needed to be done to target gifted students for specialised areas. "Perhaps greater participation in general career expos may broaden the exposure to interested students, while specialist camps or

careers nights may be open by invitation to more science oriented students, or on recommendation from teaching staff."

"In short, if there is concern about a shortage of geoscience graduates then it's up to both the major players and universities to pool resources and keep trying to get more students interested in an oil and gas career. The message is simple, this industry can provide fantastic opportunities and rewarding careers that most others can't".

On the public image of the industry, Ben is positive, but says this perception might not be shared by the general public. "They are generally cynical about petrol price increases even though marketing campaigns have attempted to show the basics of the petroleum taxation system and the impact of overseas market forces on domestic prices", he said. "The added spice of the current geopolitical climate probably doesn't help the situation either".

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Ben says the educational standard, in his experience, of Australian universities is very high. With regard to recent criticism of courses offered at universities he said: "although it makes sense that the geoscience students of today need to be more 'industry ready', it's unreasonable to think that any university department can produce the perfect graduate to everyone's satisfaction". Ben is confident he and his colleagues from Curtin University are well prepared to enter the industry and are all looking forward to the challenge.

"After a working holiday in the state's north west, my choice to study geophysics was made very simple by the fact that only Curtin University in WA exclusively offers a flexible and comprehensive coverage of geophysics at an undergraduate level", he said. Ben said field work provided a fantastic learning environment which provided him with a solid understanding of geology and geophysical methods. "Probably the most enjoyable aspect of my course so far has been the interpretive component both in minerals and petroleum geophysics", he said.

After three months of summer vacation employment with Apache Energy, Ben feels lucky to not only still be working there part-time but also to have an honours project sponsored by the company. "During this time I had the opportunity to visit service companies and attend industry seminars, I've met some great people who have helped me achieve a much better understanding of the petroleum industry at large," he said. "So all up, I've received fantastic support from the industry in being given these great opportunities".

Ben is hoping to obtain a place on a graduate programme, which he said would provide a valuable opportunity to gain intensive exposure to the industry, during the training period and beyond.

His goals in the industry include overseas postings and receiving ongoing education. He ideally would like to have maximum flexibility and choice while working for a company focussed on growth. Ben said he had no hesitation in recommending a career in geophysics to anyone with a "head for science, an interest in the earth and a desire for a non 9-5 job".

Ben is an active member of PESA and is currently the President of the WA student chapter. "I have had a fantastic opportunity to meet and socialise with members of the industry on a regular basis at both the technical lunches and more formal events", he said. "These events are providing me with an ever increasing technical appreciation and a growing confidence in my career choice and prospects."

"I'm also a member of SEG which, due to a corporate sponsorship deal, has provided free membership to the society and subscription to leading geophysical journals for the remainder of my undergraduate life – who says there's no such thing as a free lunch."